

Thursday, 15 October 8:30– 9:30

Iraq Room

Cooperative enterprises and producer organizations: People-Centred approaches for a food-secure world

ORGANIZERS

Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) – Members are UNDESA, FAO, ILO, the International Co-operative Alliance and the World Farmers' Organization (WFO)

Abstract: A successful Post-2015 Development Agenda will result in food security, inclusive growth, hunger and poverty alleviation and improved nutrition. Cooperative enterprises are a well-suited model to deliver those outcomes. In rural areas, where 70 percent of the world's poor live, cooperatives are a crucial means for small-scale agricultural producers to secure their livelihoods, lift themselves out of poverty and create economic and social opportunities for marginalized groups, such as young people and women. By uniting and empowering individual producers in a democratic, people-focused business model, cooperatives facilitate improved access to markets, capital, natural resources and infrastructure – thus contributing to a more food-secure world. They also help improve nutrition by diversifying the food supply and increasing incomes. This session will showcase the accomplishments of cooperatives in food security and nutrition and explore their potential beyond 2015.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable development, Rural development, Poverty alleviation, Sustainable agriculture

Languages: EN

Refreshments

Summary: The **main topics** presented at the event were:

- Examples and case studies of how agricultural cooperatives and producer organizations are contributing to global food security and nutrition;
- Current initiatives and opportunities to support agricultural cooperatives in ensuring food security and nutrition and to overcome challenges they face;
- Specific ways to support the strengthening of cooperatives and producer organizations in order that they can fully play their role as inclusive and responsible investors and strategic partners in national implementation frameworks emanating from the Post-2015 and Financing for Development agendas.

The **questions** answered by the event were:

- What specific contributions do cooperative enterprises and producer organizations make to food security and nutrition at the global and national level?
- What are the challenges faced by agriculture cooperatives in order to deliver the SDGs for poverty eradication, food security and nutrition? How can those challenges be overcome?
- What are the policies and other enabling factors that are needed to promote the growth of strong, capable and inclusive cooperatives and producer organizations in the food and agriculture sector at the national level, to support implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda?

The event resulted in the following **conclusions**:

- The unique long-term vision and people-centred approach of the cooperative business model make it well-suited to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Agricultural cooperatives have particular value for smallholder farming and can make important contributions to achieving global food and nutrition security.
- For agricultural cooperatives to maximise their potential contributions to the SDGs, they require an enabling legal and regulatory environment to develop and grow, greater awareness about their benefits, support to increase their advocacy efforts and engagement in policy processes, and strengthened public-private partnerships with international, national and local institutions to meet their needs.